

GAGAKU

they are hammering
nailing shut wooden boxes
unvarnished raw wood
like orange crates

but apples instead
fill the boxes
They stick their long snake-
like tongues between slats

and lick the apples they
have packed
now they look
at me and their
eyes fall out
dropping down
their cheeks
like snails crawling
down cheeks

slow as snails
now they catch those downward
moving eyes on their
curled tongue
and bring their own eyes
into their mouth
and chew
swallow
burp and
smile

content
demons
they leap up
and down
now

-- Steve Richmond

Santa Monica CA